MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PRE-AGENDA MEETING

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a pre-agenda meeting on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, Burke County Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Entrance E, in Morganton, North Carolina. The meeting was streamed live on the County's YouTube channel, BurkeCountyNC, and it was broadcast on the local cable systems. The agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting. Pursuant to Resolution No. 2024-17, adopted and effective on August 20, 2024, the Burke County Board of Commissioners conferred upon itself all the power, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Health and the Social Services Board. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman Phil Smith, Vice Chairman Brian Barrier Randy Burns Mike Stroud
STAFF:	Brian Epley, County Manager Margaret Pierce, Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Dylan Laws, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall P.C. Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended, with the addition of Budget Amendment No. 7 to the Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeff Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

BOC - ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2026 (PLACE HOLDER)

Chairman Brittain stated that pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 153A-39, it is the duty of the Board of Commissioners to elect a chairman for the ensuing year. In odd-numbered years, this occurs during the regular meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

BOC -ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2026 (PLACE HOLDER)

Chairman Brittain stated that pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 153A-39, it is the duty of the Board of Commissioners to elect a Vice Chairman for the ensuing year. In odd-numbered years, this occurs during the regular meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENTATIONS

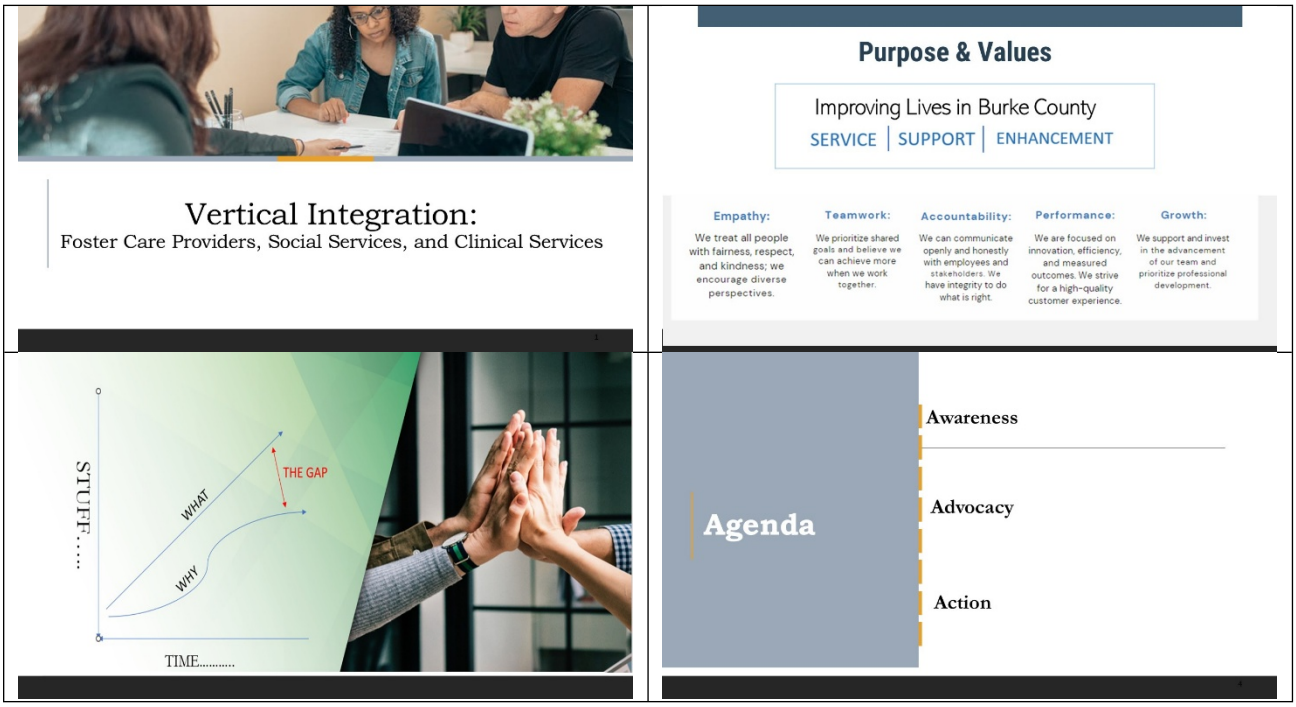
ROD - DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE (PLACE HOLDER)

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, reported that Stephanie Norman, Register of Deeds, will present a departmental update at the regular meeting. This item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - SINGLE SOURCE FOSTER CARE SUPPORT PRESENTATION

Brian Epley, County Manager, gave a presentation regarding the potential solicitation of private proposals for organizations to enhance and support foster care licensing and services. Mr. Epley's presentation was as follows:

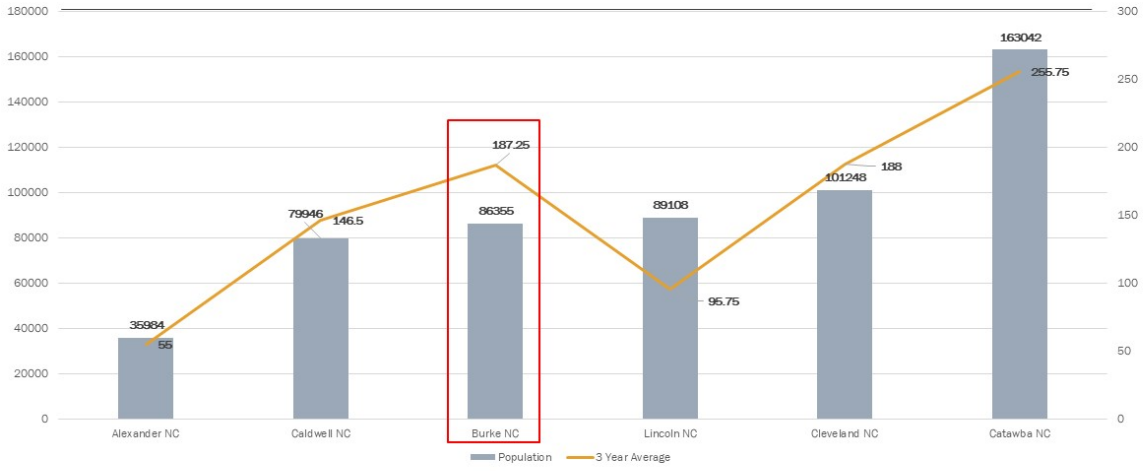


Awareness…….

FOSTER CARE OVERVIEW

In Burke County, there is a pressing issue regarding foster care. The current number of children in need of foster homes greatly surpasses the available licensed homes. This imbalance highlights the urgent need for more foster parents to step in and provide stable environments for these vulnerable children, ensuring they receive the care and support necessary for their development.

County Population vs. 3 Year Average Foster Clients



6

Annual Rate of Investigations/ Assessments for Child Welfare (per 1,000 children)

Higher than state and federal rates (2025 Reaching for Excellence and Accountability in Practice (REAP) Q2 results)

NC	Burke
43.6	67.39
The federal rate was 41.7 in 2023	

Claims

Annual Rate of Child Victimization (per 1,000 children)

Higher than state and federal rates (2025 REAP Q2 results)

NC	Burke
10.7	17.38
The federal rate was 7.4 in 2023	

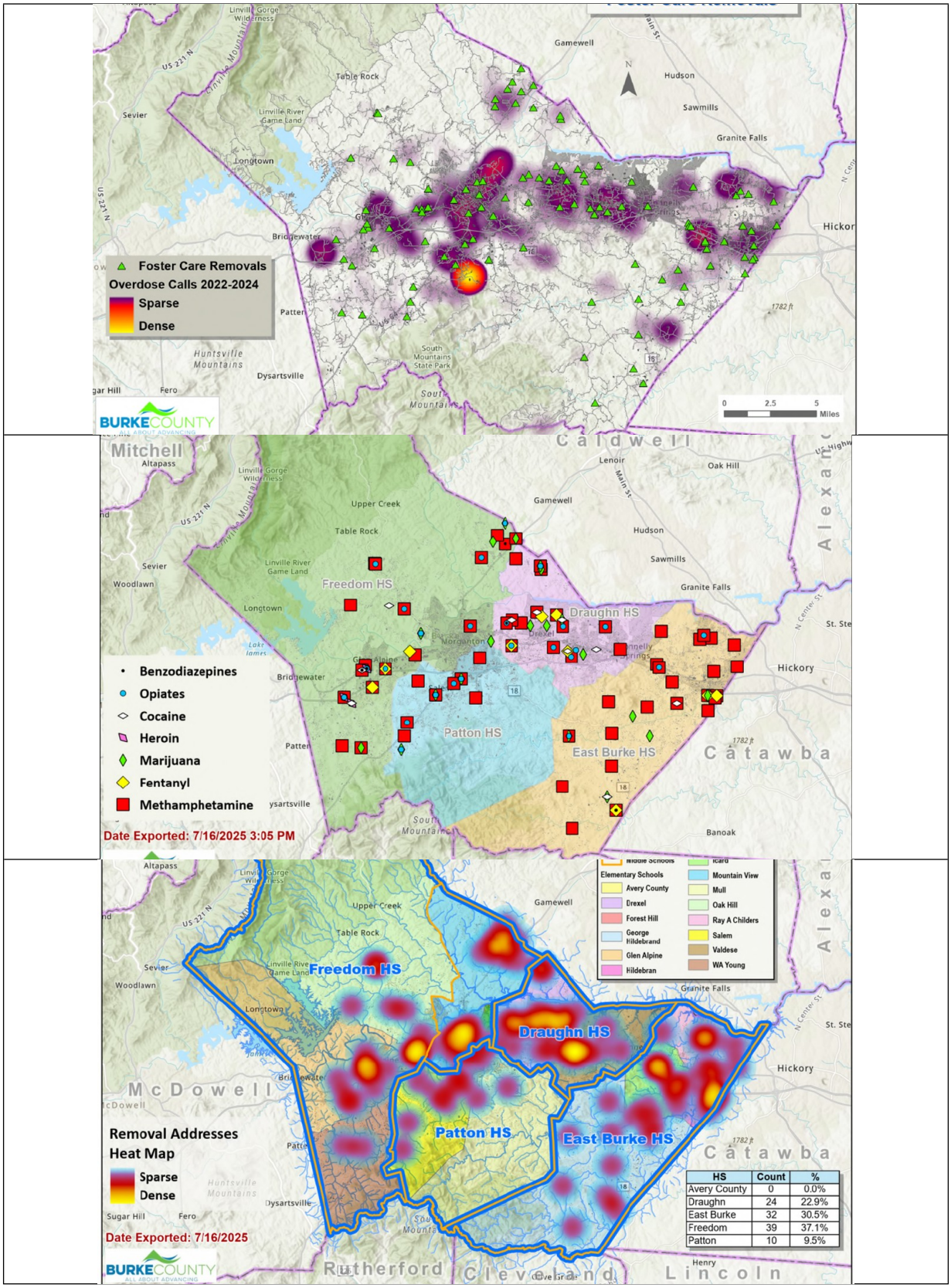
Claims substantiated

Annual Rate of Children in Foster Care

Higher than State, Region, and Similar-Sized Counties (Calendar Year 2024)

Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
13.5%	6%	7.2%	9.8%

Children taken into care


Foster Care Removals
Overdose Calls 2022-2024
Sparse
Dense
Benzodiazepines
Opiates
Cocaine
Heroin
Marijuana
Fentanyl
Methamphetamine
Date Exported: 7/16/2025 3:05 PM
Freedom HS
Draughn HS
Patton HS
East Burke HS
Removal Addresses
Heat Map
Sparse
Dense
Date Exported: 7/16/2025
HS | Count | %
Avery County | 0 | 0.0%
Draughn | 24 | 22.9%
East Burke | 32 | 30.5%
Freedom | 39 | 37.1%
Patton | 10 | 9.5%
BURKECOUNTY

Maltreatment While in Foster Care

Better than National Standard, State, and Similar-Sized Counties (2024 Calendar Year)

National	Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
8.5%	2.96%	3.07%	3.7%	1%

Treatment in care

Total Length of Time in Custody

Longer than National Standard, State, and Similar-Sized Counties (FY23–24)

% of youth in care after # of days	Burke %	State %	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
90	97.3 %	90%	89%	98.3%
180	91.9 %	83%	82%	94.9%
360	86.5 %	69%	65%	88.7%
450	68.6 %	59%	54%	78.7%
540	68.6 %	52%	47%	69.4%

Delays in court proceedings, lack of available placements, and turnover can negatively impact these outcomes.

Days in care

Percent of Permanency within 12, 23, and 24+ Months of Children Entering Foster Care

Lower than National Standard, State, Region, and Similar-Sized Counties (FY23–24)

# of months	National	Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
Within 12	40.5%	13.89%	27.18%	29.5%	13%
12-23	43.6%	34.62%	38.73%	43.1%	42.9%
24+	30.3%	28.3%	35.37%	34.8%	32.5%

Delays in court proceedings, limited placement availability, and high turnover can negatively impact these outcomes.

Timeline to permanency

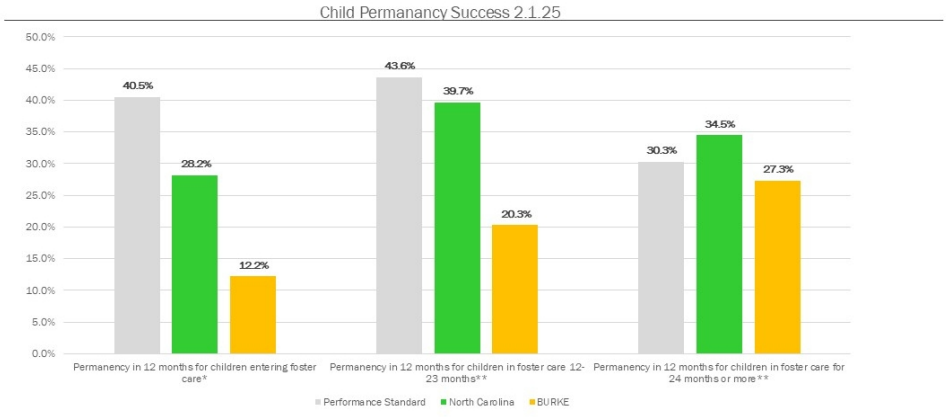
Child Welfare Data Snapshot

BURKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FOSTER CARE ANALYSIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

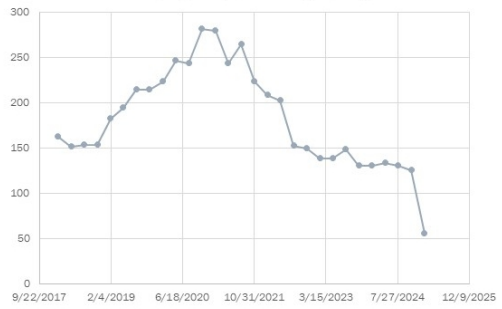
Total Children in Care 184

	Number of Children	% of Placement Type	Average Number of Days in Placement	Average Age of Child	% IV-E Eligible
Therapeutic Foster Home	25	14%	1,187	10	44%
Unlicensed Kinship Placement	50	27%	456	6	84%
Level III Group Home	5	3%	2,151	14	0%
Unleveled Group Home	12	7%	1,187	13	0%
IAFT	5	3%	1,616	12	20%
Total in PRTF	6	3%	2,093	12	0%
Licensed Family Foster	60	33%	975	6	75%
DSS Displaced	1	1%	909	14	0%
Other	20	11%	1,108	12	40%
Total	184		1,298	$ 11	29%

Child Welfare Data Snapshot



Child Welfare Data Snapshot





Building the Team…

SPARC Services & Programs

FAMILY CENTERED TREATMENT®

Family Centered Treatment® (FCT)

NC Guardian ad Litem - Burke

A Caring Alternative

HIGH COUNTRY community health

Pastor Leadership Group

ONE MORE ONE LESS PROJECT

Meg's Place

LIVE LIKE MEGAN

RFQ Summary: Integrated Foster Care Support & Clinical Services

•Burke County DSS is seeking 1–2 qualified single-source providers to partner in improving foster care and family reunification outcomes.

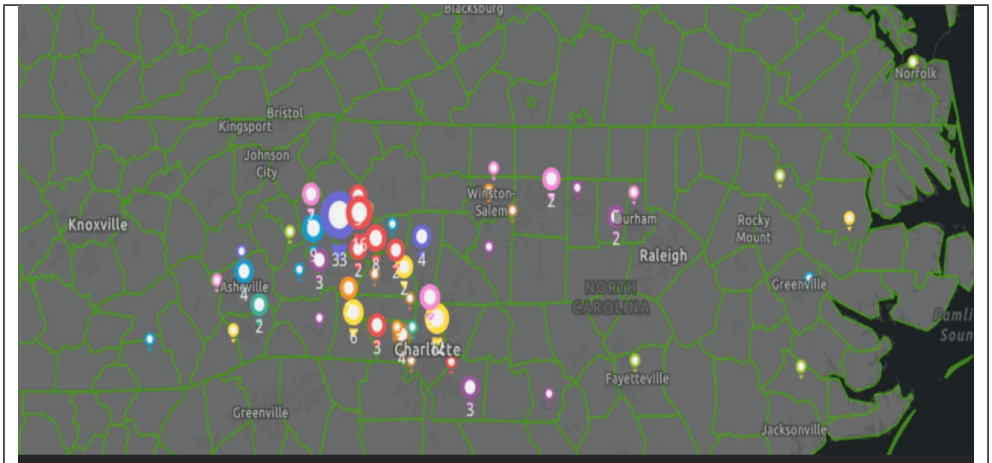
•Selected provider(s) will deliver foster parent recruitment, training, licensing, and ongoing support, along with clinical assessments and reunification-focused services for children and families.

•This coordinated approach aims to:

1. Increase the number of licensed foster parents in Burke County
2. Expand timely access to high-quality assessments and family services
3. Improve safety, timeliness and success of reunifications
4. Reduce time to permanency and lower the number of children in care

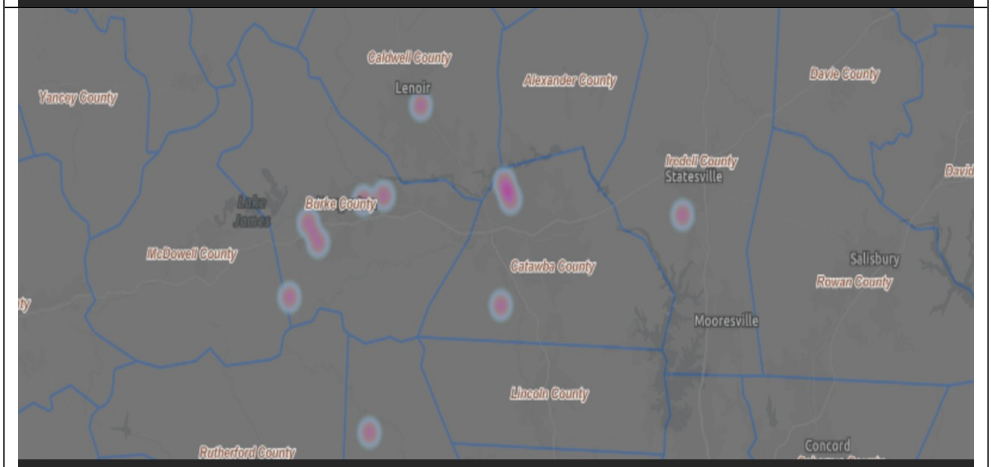
Foster Care Placement Options

- Publicly Licensed
  - Burke County trains, licenses, and manages
- Privately Licensed
  - Separate organization trains, licenses, and managed
- Unlicensed Kinship
  - Family members who do not have a foster care license

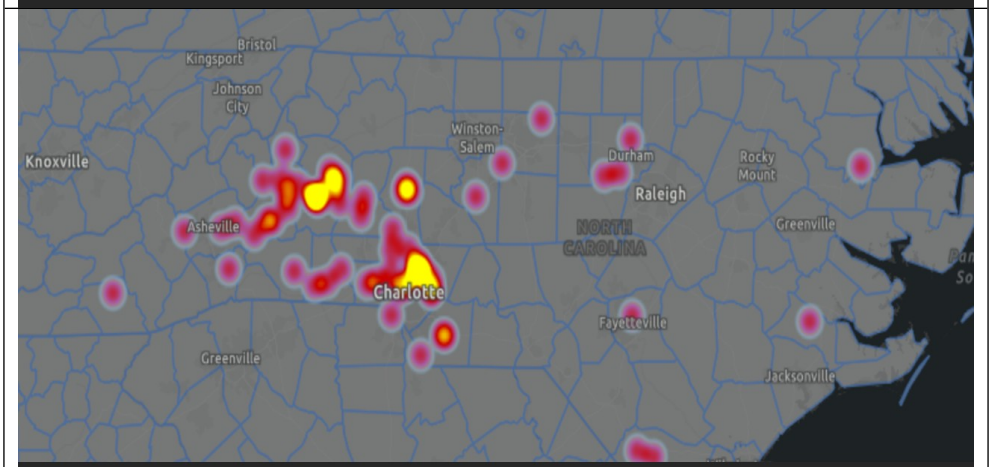


All Children by Location

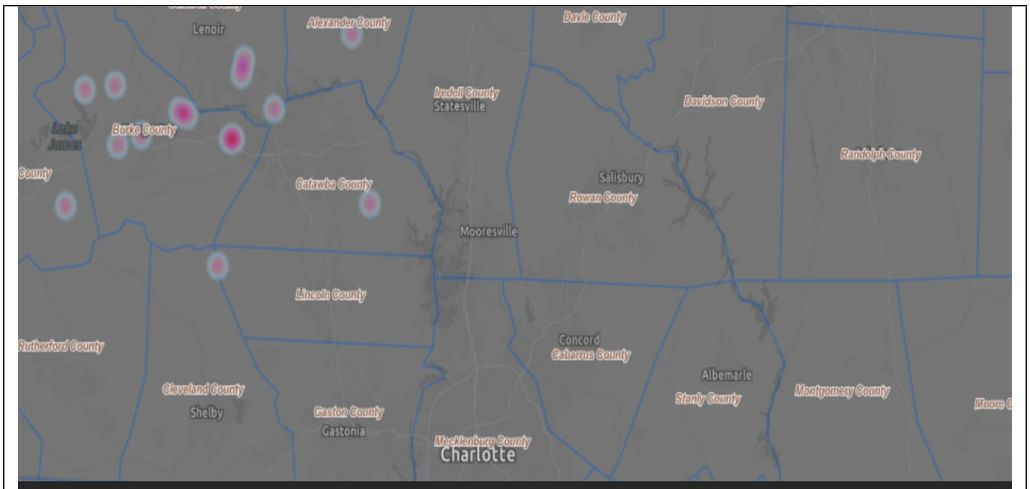
Children out of NC: 3



Licensed Through Burke County DSS



Private Agency Placement



Unlicensed Kinship Placements

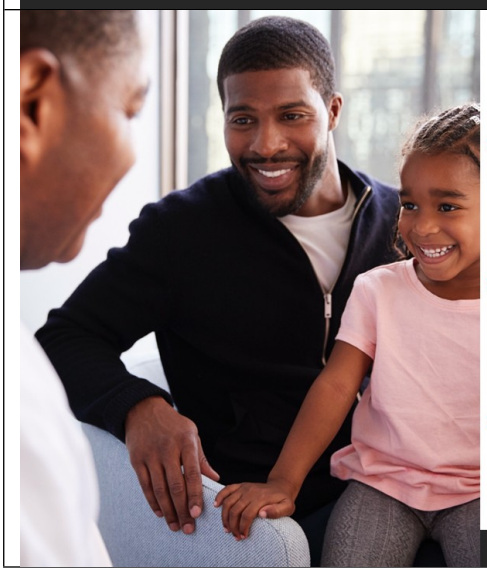
Single Sources RFQ Purpose

RFQ OVERVIEW

- **Currently the Burke County Department of Social Services (DSS) pays multiple providers for services on a fee for service basis**
- **Services must be provided to children and families involved with the child welfare system to meet federal and state requirements**
- **Sometimes services may not be readily available and/or have wait lists, or are not available locally requiring children and families to travel outside of the county**
- **To remedy these challenges, Burke County is partnering with Health Management Associates (HMA) to identify the most recurring services utilized by DSS for child welfare and a more efficient process to provide them**

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HMA



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RFQ OVERVIEW

- Assess any opportunities to improve more onsite and readily available services that can be provided locally that will further prevention efforts to reduce maltreatment of child abuse and neglect and expedite children in foster care in finding their forever home
- Identify the amount spent on these services and develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from experienced providers and provider networks capable of delivering a broad array of evidence-based clinical, therapeutic, and supportive services to children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.
- Services will include prevention, intervention, family support, foster care support, and reunification support

HMA

RFQ OVERVIEW

Types of Services Sought

- Comprehensive Clinical Assessments (CCA)
- Substance Use Assessments (list the type of assessment your providers have experience or training to administer, including SUD-specific tools)
- Drug Screening (list the type(s): urine, hair, oral, sweat patch, instant and lab-based)
- Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder Treatment (outpatient, intensive outpatient, medication-assisted treatment, peer support, harm reduction, etc.)
- Parenting Education
- Parenting Capacity Evaluations/Screenings

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HMA

RFQ OVERVIEW

Types of Services Sought

- Individual, Family, and Group Counseling (list all the modality types utilized, including evidence-based/informed, or promising practice models)
- Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Assessments and Interventions (including perpetrator interventions)
- Intensive In-Home Services (e.g. Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (In-home Adaption), High Fidelity Wraparound)
- Medication Management (psychiatric)
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) or ACT-like services
- Forensic Child Medical Examinations (CME) / Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) services for children
- Foster Parent Recruitment, Training (including MAPP/GPS, TIPS-MAPP, Deciding Together, Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma), Licensing, and Retention Support
- Partnerships with faith-based organizations who help with local recruitment of foster homes
- Other value-added or best-in-practice services not listed above that the applicant offers that would benefit Burke County children and families (e.g., trauma-focused interventions, evidence based/informed interventions, social drivers of health services)

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HMA

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RFQ OVERVIEW

GOALS

Establish pre-qualified providers/vendors who can rapidly respond to referrals and help child welfare meet federal and state measures related to safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families

Increase the number of available licensed foster homes in Burke County

Ensure localized and timely access to readily available assessment/screening and services and avoid wait lists



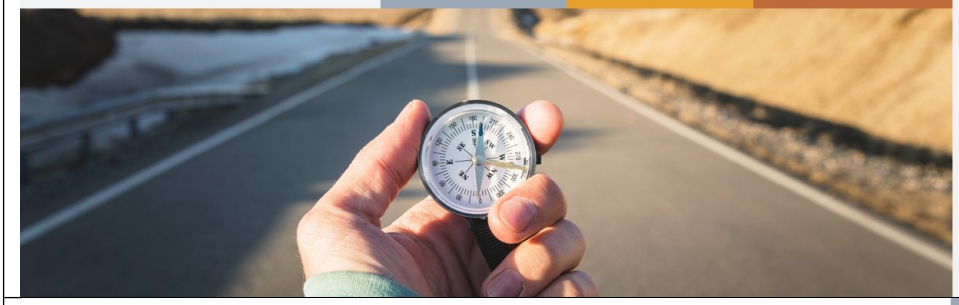
HMA

GOALS

Ability to provide services onsite and/or within Burke County

Improved Federal and State Outcomes (Recidivism, Foster Care Stability, Time to Permanency)

Budget neutrality or cost savings at or below the current expenditures
assess opportunities to blend and braid funding streams
maximize Medicaid reimbursement (so that county dollars are the payor of last resort)



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RFQ OVERVIEW

HMA

Where we are now….

Public Foster Care Recruitment and Licensing

- Public DSS foster care offers direct state oversight but limited resources.
- Families are licensed directly through their local Department of Social Services (DSS), which operates under the NC Division of Social Services.
- All foster parents must complete the state-mandated TIPS-MAPP training (30 hours) regardless of whether they go through DSS or a private agency.
- DSS manages placements for children in state custody and typically prioritizes reunification with birth families.
- DSS provides case management, but resources can be limited due to high caseloads and budget constraints.
- No agency fees for families; DSS handles licensing and support directly.
- Few staff dedicated to supporting foster families and to recruit and train.
- Competes with the private sector who pays higher foster parent payment rates.

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RFQ OVERVIEW

HMA

Foster Care Benefits

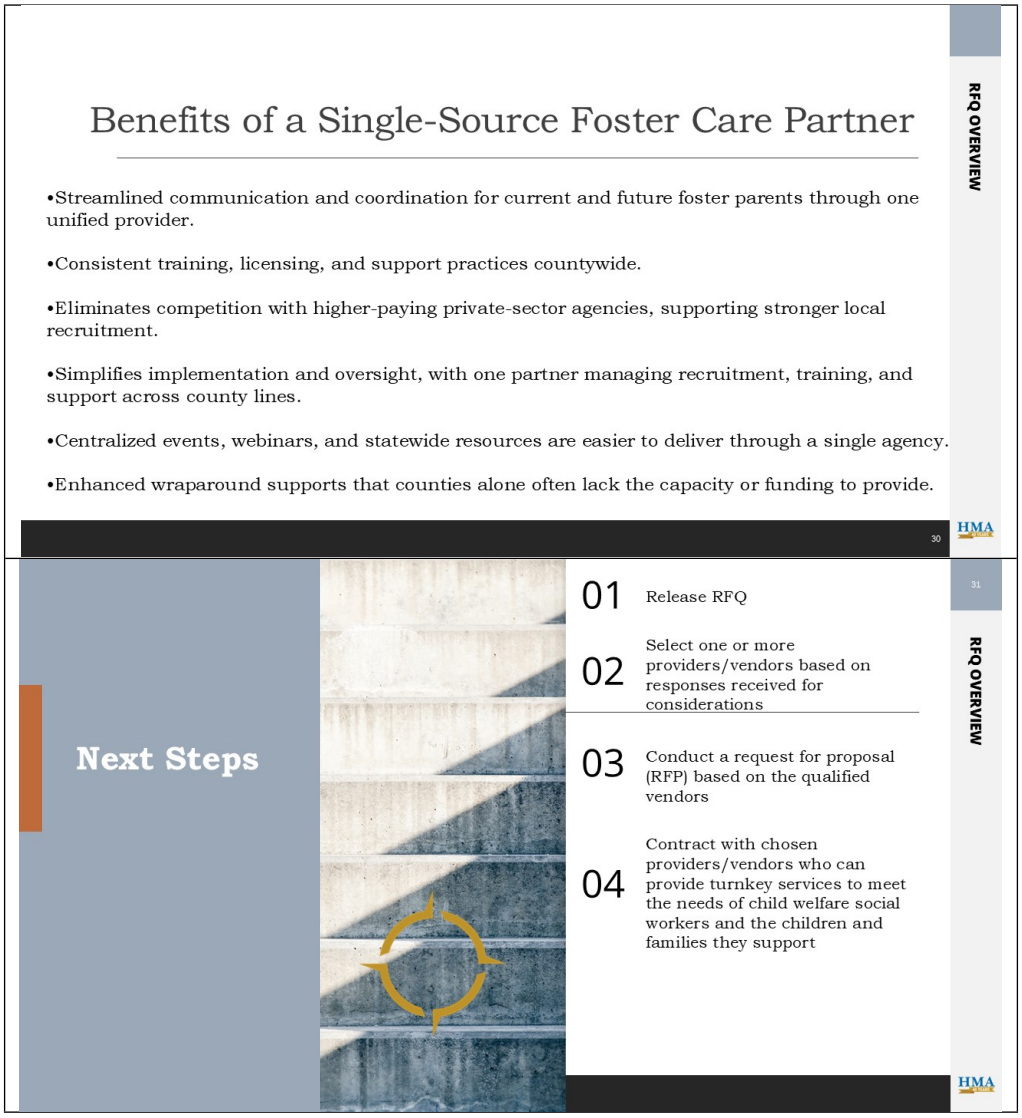
Private Foster Care Recruitment and Licensing

- Private agencies provide more flexibility, specialized care, and support.
- They have more staff who are readily available to help with recruitment, training, and licensing
- Private agencies are approved by the state to license foster families and often specialize and provide additional "enhanced" services and wrap around supports that counties typically do not offer (e.g., therapeutic services for behavioral or mental health needs).
- Agencies often provide additional training beyond TIPS-MAPP, plus more individualized support, respite care, and sometimes higher stipends for specialized placements (e.g., they pay families more than counties do which often causes counties to lose foster parents to private agencies due to increased payment rate and more supportive services).
- Can often bill Medicaid to avoid a county from paying county dollars where the county supplements payment versus being the primary payor,
- Private agencies can tailor services to specific populations (e.g., teens, sibling groups).
- Typically have more flexibility and capacity for recruitment, training, and ongoing family support compared to DSS.

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RFQ OVERVIEW

HMA



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

CONSENT AGENDA

BOC - CONSIDERATION OF THE 2026 RULES OF PROCEDURE

Chairman Brittain explained that it is the Board's practice to review, amend as needed, and adopt its Rules of Procedures (ROP) on an annual basis. The DRAFT 2026 ROP, set forth in the agenda packet and incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference, is largely based on the 4th Edition,

2017, Suggested Rules of Procedure for the Board of County Commissioners, which was published by the SOG (School of Government) and authored by Trey Allen.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

BOC - ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Brittain noted that, in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 153A-40, adoption of a resolution setting the Board's meeting schedule for 2026 is needed. The proposed schedule is as follows:

1. Pre-agenda meetings at 3:00 p.m. in the County Board Room (Commissioners' Meeting Room) on the following dates:

January 5, 2026	July - N.A.
February 2, 2026	August - N.A.
March 2, 2026	September 8, 2026*
April 6, 2026	October 5, 2026
May 4, 2026	November 2, 2026
June 1, 2026	December 7, 2026

*Tuesday

2. Regular meetings at 6:00 p.m. in the County Board Room (Commissioners' Meeting Room) on the following dates:

January 20, 2026*	July 20, 2026
February 16, 2026	August 17, 2026
March 16, 2026	September 21, 2026
April 20, 2026	October 19, 2026
May 18, 2026	November 16, 2026
June 15, 2026	December 21, 2026

*Tuesday

3. Workshop meetings:

March 5, 2026	9:00 a.m.	WPCC, 1001 Burkemont Ave., Morganton
March 6 2026	9:00 a.m.	WPCC, 1001 Burkemont Ave., Morganton

4. An organizational meeting on Monday, December 7, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., in the County Board Room (Commissioners' Meeting Room), Burke Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Morganton.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Burns astutely noted that conflicts with the meeting schedule tend to arrive later in the year. There being no further discussion, this item was moved to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

BOC - 2026 COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Brittain highlighted that there are numerous boards or committees that Commission members are appointed to serve on. Consideration of work schedules and prior commitments should be taken into consideration when making the appointments.

Chairman Brittain noticed an error with the America 250 NC Committee appointment, and the changes are noted in red. This sparked a brief discussion, but no further changes were needed.

Authority, Board or Commission	2025 Appointee	2026 Appointee
America 250 NC Committee	~~Smith~~ Stroud	~~Smith~~ Stroud
Burke Development Inc.		
Burke Co. BOC Chairman* (Designee)	Brittain	
Burke Co. Manager*	Epley	Epley
Burke County Cooperative Water Board	Burns	Burns
Child Protection Child Fatality Prevention Team	Barrier	Barrier
EMS Peer Review Committee	Burns	Burns
Foothills Regional Airport Authority	Burns	Burns
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council	Smith	Smith
JCPC Oversight "Governance" Committee	Smith	Smith
Library Board of Trustees	Barrier	Stroud
Local Emergency Planning Committee	Stroud	Stroud
Opioid Advisory Committee	Brittain	Brittain
Partners Health Management	Brittain	Brittain
Public Health Advisory Board	Smith	Smith
Recreation Commission	Stroud	Stroud
Smart Start (Burke Partnership for Children)	Barrier	Barrier
Social Services Advisory Board	Barrier	Barrier
Tourism Development Authority	Smith	Smith
Transportation Advisory Committee	Stroud	Stroud
Transportation Coordinating Committee	Planning Dir.	Glines
VEDIC* Term – Until Further Notice	Stroud	Barrier
VEDIC* Term – Until Further Notice	Burns	Burns
WPCOG - Policy Board: Alternate	Brittain	Brittain
WPCOG - Policy Board: Delegate	Burns	Burns

*Based on BDI bylaws.

This item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

AM250 - RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

Ed Phillips, Chairman, America 250 NC Committee, requested adoption of a resolution of support for America's 250th birthday.

Additional information from the agenda packet:

> The year 2026 marks America's 250th anniversary. Burke County has played a notable role in North Carolina and U.S. history, including its ties to the Overmountain Men and nearby Revolutionary War battles, as well as the preservation of significant historic sites such as the Historic Burke County Courthouse and the Charles McDowell House. The Burke County America 250 NC Committee was formed to promote and coordinate local commemorative activities through education, events, and public engagement. Ed Phillips, Chairman, America 250 NC Committee, requests the adoption of the following resolution, which recognizes this historical event and the role Burke County has played in founding and shaping this great nation. A report will also be presented on planned activities to commemorate our nation's 250th anniversary.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

Mr. Phillips referred the Board to an activity report included in the agenda packet regarding the upcoming birthday celebration and noted plans for the planting of a Liberty Tree in 2026. The full report is hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENTS OR REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, noted that the terms of appointment for the following members of the Tourism Development Authority ended on December 31st:

- Debra Perry (Collector of Occupancy Tax)
- Rob Winkler (City of Morganton)
- Morrissa Angi (Town of Valdese)
- Dana Whisnant (Travel / Tourism at-large)
- Mike Watts (Travel / Tourism at-large)

The terms are for two (2) years, ending December 31, 2027. Reappointment of all the existing members was requested except for Rob Winkler. Makenzie McGinnis is Morganton's recommended appointee.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 6 -$136,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 6, which recognizes $116,000 in adoption promotion funding from the NC Department of Health and Human Services and a $20,000 grant from the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The DHHS adoption funds will support advertising and printing needs, storage for the NACAC Adoption Conference, TPR work for a contract attorney, supplies, and MAPP classes. The DMVA grant will support Veterans Services through wellness activities, community outreach, and educational opportunities.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 6			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-52000-01-434615-	SPECIAL ADOPTION FUNDS	$116,000	
100-54000-01-433000	NC DMVA GRANT	$20,000	
EXPENSES			
100-52060-20-561500-	SPECIAL ADOPTION FUNDS	$116,000	
100-54000-20-586001-	GRANT EXPENDITURES	$20,000	

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT DONATION OF DESK CUBICLES FROM WPCOG

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, reported that the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) has surplused 10 sets of desk cubicles, each measuring approximately 74 inches in height by 48 inches in width. These cubicles were originally purchased by the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board using Workforce Investment Act funds. The items have been properly removed from WPCOG's asset inventory in accordance with its disposition policy, and the surplus action has been approved by Executive Director Anthony Starr.

The adoption of a resolution was requested to formally accept the donation of the cubicles pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 160A-274, which authorizes counties to acquire personal property by gift and requires such actions to be exercised by resolution of the Board of Commissioners. Once accepted, the cubicles will be utilized by various departments as needed.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - AUTHORIZATION TO SELL SURPLUS PROPERTY ON GOVDEALS

Brian Epley, County Manager, explained that county staff have identified certain real property as surplus and no longer needed for county operations. Under North Carolina law, counties may dispose of surplus property through public auction, including electronic auctions, pursuant to

N.C.G.S. § 160A-270. GovDeals is an online marketplace specifically for government agencies, educational institutions, and related public-sector entities to sell surplus assets "as is, where is" using a competitive and transparent auction format and has been successfully used by the County for prior surplus sales. Mr. Epley requested that the Board of Commissioners grant authorization to sell designated surplus real property through the GovDeals online auction platform.

The proposed resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF REAL PROPERTY
BY ELECTRONIC PUBLIC AUCTION

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute §153A-176 permits a County to dispose of any real or personal property belonging to it according to the procedures prescribed in Chapter 160A, Article 12; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute § 160A-270 authorizes a County to sell real property at public auction, including electronic public auction, upon adoption of an authorizing resolution; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Burke County Board of Commissioners to utilize the services of GovDeals to perform an electronic public auction for the sale of certain surplus real property.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Burke County Board of Commissioners as follows:

1. Burke County no longer has need for the following parcels of real property and declares the same to be surplus;

REID#	Address	Desc. of Property
23217	9737 Lakeview Drive, Hickory, NC	0.38 acres
16893	1716 Laural Drive, Morganton, NC	0.20 acres
37261	West View Trail, Hickory, NC	0.45 acres
38040	Kirksey Drive, Morganton, NC	1.01 acres
38041	Kirksey Drive, Morganton, NC	1.47 acres
20313	2668 Pine Mountain Drive, Connelly Springs, NC	0.06 acres
9797	2664 Pine Mountain Drive, Connelly Springs, NC	0.06 acres
12638	Rockyford Street, Morganton, NC	0.92 acres
29737	Old NC 18, Connelly Springs, NC	1.32 acres
32899	3095 Music Mountain Road, Morganton, NC	0.63 acres
34337	Mallard Road, Connelly Springs, NC	0.57 acres
44993	37TH Street SW, Hickory, NC	0.14 acres

2. The Burke County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the sale of the above-described real property by public electronic auction services at www.govdeals.com;
3. The Burke County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 160A-270(c), the Notice of Auction of the above-described real property solely by electronic means;
4. The electronic auction shall begin on December 16, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. at www.govdeals.com;

5. The record of bids shall be reported to the Board of Commissioners at their pre-agenda meeting on Monday, January 5, 2026;
6. The Board of Commissioners will decide to accept or reject the highest responsible bid for each property within thirty (30) days after bids are reported at the above-prescribed meeting;
7. Burke County reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw any listed parcel from the auction at any time before the auction begins;
8. To be responsible, a bid deposit of five percent (5%) of the amount of the bid must be paid within five (5) business days after the close of the auction. The deposit of the bidder to whom the award is made will be held until the sale of the property is closed; if that bidder refuses at any time to close the sale, the deposit will be forfeited to the County. Final payment and close of sale must be accomplished within 30 days after the board accepts a bid. Bidder is responsible for a 7.5% sales commission payable to Burke County and all property surveys, deed preparation, and attorney and recording costs associated with the deed transfer.
9. This Resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statutes § 153A-176, 160A-266, and 160A-270.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Barrier asked whether the proposed process could be implemented in time to incorporate the bids that have already been submitted to the County's website. Mr. Epley responded that, if authorized by the Board, staff would contact the existing bidders, guide them to the GovDeals site, and allow them to submit the same bids online. Commissioner Barrier appreciated that this approach would be beneficial and expand the pool of potential buyers.

There being no further discussion, this item was moved to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

OAC / CM - AUTHORIZATION TO USE OPIOID LITIGATION SETTLEMENT FUNDS TO EXPAND PORT TEAM - $8,125

Dr. Katie Samuels, Opioid Settlement Coordinator, requested approval for the use of $8,125 in opioid settlement funds to support the addition of an Assistant Medical Director for the Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT). She explained that the resolution, set forth in the agenda packet and hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference, allows for the necessary funding that would be used to add Dr. Thomas Meek, Assistant Medical Director, to the PORT team. Dr. Samuels noted that this request is consistent with the current practice of utilizing assistant medical directors with specialized expertise. She further stated that Dr. Meek is a Doctor of Osteopathy, an addiction medicine specialist, and has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the PORT program.

The OAC (Opioid Advisory Committee) heard this request at their Nov. 18th meeting. Although the OAC was supportive of the initiative, a vote was not taken due to the lack of a quorum.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 7 - $205,400

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 7, recognizing funds transferred from capital reserve to cover the replacement of a fire marshal vehicle due to engine failure, animal services vehicle funds to cover the replacement due to a vehicle accident, and additional funds for unanticipated capital repairs for EMS. This amendment will also correct clerical errors in the approved Schedule of Fees for the Residential Dwelling Fee ($92 to $94) and the Municipal per-gallon rate ($5.00 to $5.50).

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 7			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-00000-11-439410-	TRANSFER FROM FUND 410	$168,000	
100-00000-00-438000-	MISC REVENUE-INSURANCE	$37,400	
EXPENSES			
100-46501-10-574005-	VEHICLES	$80,000	
100-46503-10-574005-	VEHICLES	$70,000	
100-46200-10-574005-	VEHICLES	$55,400	
410-00000-55-595100-	TRANSFER TO GENERAL FUND	$168,000	
410-00000-05-599999-	BUDGET SET ASIDE		$168,000

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

ITEMS FOR DECISION

CM - ORD. AMENDING CHAPTER 6, ANIMALS, BURKE CO. CODE FIRST READING (PLACE HOLDER)

Brian Epley, County Manager, noted that the proposed amendments had been provided to the Board in advance and that the County Attorney's Office has completed its review, with minor technical revisions to be incorporated prior to Board action. He explained that pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 153A, the ordinance must be heard by the Board twice, with this presentation constituting the first hearing. Mr. Epley stated that the ordinance, originally drafted approximately five (5) years ago, has been updated primarily to clarify definitions, modernize provisions, and address accountability issues related to tethering, animals running at large, and nuisance concerns. Further, he highlighted that the Animal Advisory Board has worked extensively on the revisions.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, reported that Ray Johnson, who occupies Seat No. 3, west - voting member, on the Board of Adjustment, has resigned due to an out-of-state relocation. His term ends September 30, 2026. Applications were solicited, and there are several applications on file for this vacancy.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION & REVIEW

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, stated that Betty Greer occupies Seat No. 1 on the Board of Equalization and Review, and her term ends on December 31st. She has served on this board since 2015. There are three (3) additional applications on file for this seat, which has a 3-year term.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments, then requested the Clerk get a report from the Chair on Ms. Greer's attendance. Clerk Draughn clarified the application process for Commissioner Burns and noted, in response to a question from the Chairman, that all applications are recent.

Note: Ms. Greer's attendance record was strong, and it was provided to the Board as requested.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENTS OR REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, said that the terms of appointment for the following members of the Public Health Advisory Board end December 31st:

- Seat No. 4 - Dr. Anthony Frank, Physician
- Seat No. 8 - Dr. Joel Welch, Engineer
- Seat No. 11 - Gwen Stephens, At-large

Note: Ms. Stephens also represents the PHAB on the Animal Advisory Board. All three (3) members desire reappointment, and there is an additional application on file for the at-large seat.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments and requested an attendance report for Ms. Stephens. There being no further discussion, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

Note: Ms. Stephens' attendance record was strong, and it was provided to the Board as requested.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

TAX - TAX COLLECTION REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2025 (PLACE HOLDER)

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, reported that he would present the Tax Collection Report for the period between July 1, 2025, and November 30, 2025, at the regular meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

TAX - TAX RELEASE AND REFUND REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2025 (PLACE HOLDER)

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, reported that he will present the list of releases and refunds for consideration during the regular meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.**

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Chairman Brittain asked Board members to submit their reports to the Clerk for inclusion in the regular agenda packet. He issued a reminder for some upcoming office closures, community events, and meetings. He also invited youth groups to sign up to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at Commissioners' meetings and reminded citizens about the ability to report litter in need of cleaning via the County's website. Further, he encouraged citizens to spay or neuter pets, adopt or foster from Burke County Animal Services, secure their loads when visiting convenience centers or the landfill, avoid littering, and report littered areas through the Community Beautification tab on the county's website.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS - NONE

ACTION ITEMS

DSS - DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE FOR OCTOBER 2025

Korey Fisher-Wellman, DSS Director, presented the monthly DSS report as follows:



HIRING & SEPARATION REPORT OCTOBER 2025

Current Openings:

Position Title	Position #:	Status
IMC III Lead worker	51901	
IMC II	51382	
IMC II	51820	
IMC II	51898	
Social Worker IAT	51866	Conditional Offer
Social Worker IAT	51438	Conditional Offer
Social Worker IAT	51776	
Social Worker IAT	51441	
Social Worker IAT	51905	
Social Worker IAT	51341	
Social Worker III	51829	
Social Worker II	51682	
Social Worker Supervisor III	52045	
Administrative Officer II	51667	

Separations:
Total = 2
Voluntary Resignation = 2
Number of Hirings:
Total = 4
Income Maintenance Caseworker II = 1
Income Maintenance Caseworker III = 1
Social Worker IA&T= 2

BURKECOUNTY

OPERATIONS

Economic Services MOU Data

METRICS PER MOU					
	FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES				
		MOU MEASURE	80%	95%	
ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	APP TIMELINESS RATE- REGULAR	APP TIMELINESS RATE-EXPEDITE	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE	
10,695	5,568	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	
WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES					
ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	MOU MEASURE	95%	95%	
			APPLICATION TIMELINESS	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE	
83	55		Achieved	Achieved	
MEDICAID		MOU MEASURE	90	90	95
TOTAL MEDICAID RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES		REPORT CARD MAD	REPORT CARD OTHER	Straight Through Processing
28,733	24,037		Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE					
	MOU PERFORMANCE MEASURE			95%	89%
SA ACTIVE CASES				SAA TIMELINESS APPLICATIONS	SAD TIMELINESS APPLICATIONS
253				Achieved	Achieved
ENERGY PROGRAMS					
	MOU PERFORMANCE MEASURE			90%	95%
	CIP APPLICATIONS PROCESSED	LIEAP APPLICATIONS PROCESSED		% PROCESSED TIMELY -NO SOURCE 1 DAY	% PROCESSED TIMELY -WITH SOURCE 2 DAYS
	376	1		Achieved	Achieved
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY					
		PERFORMANCE MEASURE		95%	
	ACTIVE CASES			APPLICATION TIMELINESS	
	395			Achieved	

Economic Services Update

MEDICAID

	AGED OR DISABLED ADULT ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS Does not include MXP or FP cases	ADULT ACTIVE CASES *Does not include MXP or FP cases	FAMILY AND CHILDREN ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS	FAMILY AND CHILDREN ACTIVE CASES	TOTAL MEDICAID APPLICATIONS TAKEN	TOTAL MEDICAID REVIEWS	TOTAL MEDICAID REVIEWS WITHOUT WAIVERS	CAP REFERRALS	LTC REFERRALS	TOTAL MEDICAID RECIPIENTS	TOTAL NEMT TRIPS	REPORT CARD MAD	REPORT CARD OTHER	RECERT COMPLETION TIMELINESS RATE	Straight Through Processing	Total
								MOU MEASURE	90	90	95					
SEP	5384	7609	21,937	13958	382	412	1890	3	17	27,323	626	96%	92%	[redacted]	100%	93%
OCT	5387	7563	22,277	14091	446	90	1128	4	14	27,666	642	96%	92%	[redacted]	100%	93%
NOV	5405	7584	22,655	14304	688	363	1746	9	10	28,062	573	97%	97%	[redacted]	100%	97%
DEC	5415	7567	22936	14554	582	1485	2246	10	11	28,351	582	100%	97%	[redacted]	100%	96%
JAN	5412	7612	23126	14845	565	2090	2900	5	9	28,538	651	96%	96%	[redacted]	100%	96%
FEB	5391	7,608	23436	14,952	352	2223	2580	1	7	28,561	683	93%	95%	[redacted]	100%	95%
MAR	5356	7,618	23247	15,012	411	855	2969	11	13	28603	735	100%	95%	[redacted]	100%	95%
APR	5389	7,752	23481	15,037	380	1571	*	4	12	28,870	683	96%	95%	[redacted]	100%	95%
MAY	5351	7,658	23365	15,147	382	*	*	3	9	28,716	713	93%	97%	[redacted]	100%	97%
JUN	5338	7,683	23515	15,235	346	1540	n/a	0	17	28,851	698	96%	94%	[redacted]	100%	95%
JUL	5327	7,734	23,544	15,333	382	1435	n/a	2	18	28,873	*	93%	95%	[redacted]	100%	95%
AUG	5283	7,753	23448	15,418	325	1386	n/a	1	12	28,731	823	100%	96%	[redacted]	100%	96%
SEP	5289	7,744	23471	15,459	378	1586	n/a	2	16	28,740	756	100%	94%	[redacted]	100%	94%
OCT	5311	7,747	23422	16,290	398	1606	n/a	1	16	28,733	638	100%	98%	[redacted]	100%	98%

Economic Services Update

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

	ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	APPLICATIONS TAKEN	APP TIMELINESS RATE-REGULAR	APP TIMELINESS RATE-EXPEDITE	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE	RECERTS COMPLETED	FNS EBT BENEFITS
MOU MEASURE				95%	95%	95%		
OCT	11,503	5975	731/6302	98.54%	94.23%	72.63%	285	3,230,130.00
NOV	11,981	6206	394	100.00%	97.81	67%	739	2,962,954.00
DEC	12,193	6312	346	97.62%	98.15%	100%	356	2,016,823.00
JAN	12,108	6275	585	99.31%	99.77%	100%	525	1,973,378.00
FEB	11,951	6236	449	97.18%	100%	98.75%	561	1,963,605.00
MAR	11,907	6183	499	97.21%	100%	98.48%	526	1,965,566.00
APR	11,396	5959	591	97.24%	100.00%	97.77%	720	1,871,687.00
MAY	11,002	5732	576	98.11%	99.15%	99.13%	692	1,808,941.00
JUN	10,804	5,597	598	97.69%	92.73%	98.19%	553	1,783,246.00
JUL	10,715	5,556	594	96.83%	96.84%	98.74%	548	1,760,696.00
AUG	10,783	5602	558	99.52%	99.31%	98.86%	528	1,778,789.00
SEP	10,794	5605	580	99.13%	97.98%	99.41%	509	1,752,253.00
OCT	10,695	5568	512	99..07%	99.02%	98.65%	445	1,797,705.00

ADULT SERVICES UPDATE



Guardianship
- Total Wards: 69
- Contracted Wards: 17

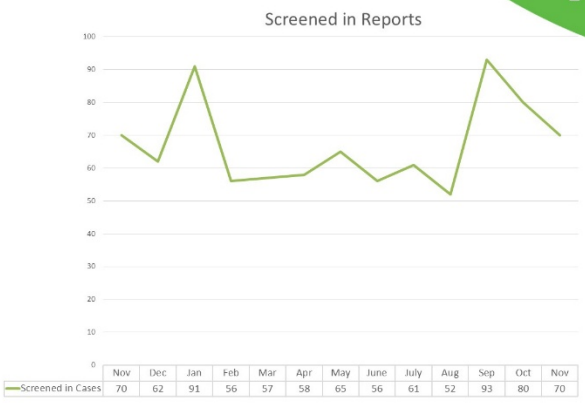
SAIH (Special Assistance In-Home)
- Active Cases: 53
- State Average Caseload: 25-30

CAP (Community Alternatives Program)
- Current Enrollment: 133
- Capacity: 188+

Oct APS Data

Category	Number	Notes
Total APS Reports Received	34	
APS Reports Screened In	19	Reports meeting criteria for an investigation
Substantiated Cases	3	
Confirmed Cases	5	Includes substantiations and other confirmations
Cases Opened for Services	3	Ongoing support and case management
Outreach Cases Assigned	7	Proactive engagement with at-risk adults
Service Referrals	11	Referrals for supportive community services
Guardianship Referrals	4	Referrals for potential legal guardianship

CPS REPORTS AS OF 11/21



- September 2025 intake peaks at 93.
- Average reports per month since PathNC adoption is 73.75.

BURKECOUNTY

CPS CASELOADS



- High point was February 2025 with 306 open cases.
- A stark increase in reporting numbers has contributed to a rise in caseloads.

BURKECOUNTY

FOSTER CARE UPDATE



Every child deserves a family

Foster Care Snapshot – Burke County

- Total children in foster care: 187
- New entries into care this period: 6
- Exits from care this period: 4

BURKECOUNTY

FOSTER CARE CHRISTMAS UPDATE

Thank You, Community!

Because of your kindness and donations, nearly 200 children experiencing foster care will experience a brighter, more joyful Christmas this year.

Your support helps ensure every child feels seen, valued, and celebrated this holiday season.

We are deeply grateful for your compassion, your contributions, and your commitment to our community. Together, we are making a meaningful difference—one child at a time.

Thank you for giving the gift of hope and holiday joy!



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Barrier praised the positive attitude and leadership of Mr. Fisher-Wellman and his staff amid ongoing changes, including upcoming building transitions. Brian Epley, County Manager, added that DSS leadership is strong and professional at all levels, noting recent successes in recruiting and competitive pay and vacancy metrics. He acknowledged the challenges of the field but stated that the department is in a stronger position than in recent years and expressed appreciation for the Board's support and the dedication of DSS staff.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain called for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeff Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

BOC - ANNUAL EXAMINATION OF BONDS

Chairman Brittain noted that the Board was conducting its annual examination of bonds for the Finance Director, Tax Collector, Register of Deeds, and Sheriff. He opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Additional information from the agenda packet:

> North Carolina General Statute § 58-72-20 requires that the official bonds of certain county officers—identified in G.S. 58-72-10—be examined annually on the first Monday in December. This review is intended to ensure that each officer's bond remains sufficient to cover the amount of money or property handled in their official capacity and to secure the faithful performance of their duties. If, upon examination, it is determined that a bond's security has been impaired, reduced, or is otherwise inadequate, the statute mandates that the bond be renewed, strengthened, or supplemented. Additional security must be obtained as needed, within statutory limits, to restore the bond to full sufficiency. However, any renewal or strengthening may not increase the bond's penalty beyond the maximum amount allowed by law for that officer's term. The statute, originally enacted in 1869–70 and amended multiple times, establishes an annual compliance requirement to protect public funds and ensure continued accountability of bonded officers.

Position	Bond Amount	Statutory Requirement
Finance Director	$1,000,000	Amount equal to 10% of the annual budgeted funds, up to $1,000,000, NCGS 159-29
Tax Collector	$75,000	Amount considered reasonable by BCC, NCGS 105-349-c
Register of Deeds	$50,000	At least $10,000, but no more than $50,000, NCGS 161-4
Sheriff	$25,000	Amount considered reasonable by BCC, but no more than $25,000, NCGS 162-8

Motion: To examine the County's public officials' bonds and approve as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeff Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeff Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Approved this 16th day of February 2026.

_____
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:

_____
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board